California Cradle to Career Data System Design Process

In 2019, the California State Legislature passed the California Cradle-to-Career Data System Act, which sets out requirements for the development of a statewide data infrastructure. This data system will link together educational, workforce, financial aid, and social service information to address disparities in opportunities and improve outcomes for all students.

Over the course of 2020, the California Governor's Office, with support from WestEd, will lead a process to design the first phase of the California Cradle to Career Data System. The recommended process will be documented in a report to the Department of Finance and the Legislature. In July 2021, a second report will provide additional implementation specifications.

Design Elements

The design process for 2020 will include:

Defining Priorities

Before addressing technical or legal specifications, representatives from partner entities, advisory committees, and the public will have the opportunity to weigh in regarding the types of information that the system should produce in phase one of development.

Specifying Privacy and Legal Requirements

Sub-committees that include experts from partner entities will work together to produce technical specifications and contract language necessary to implement phase one.

Developing a Policy and Research Agenda

To ensure that the system will include the information necessary to answer critical questions about student outcomes, partner entities will work with advocacy and research organizations to define how these issues will be studied.

Establishing Management and Access Structures

Based on the information, legal, and privacy requirements specified in the design process, the partner entities will recommend how the data should be stored, where it should be housed, and the process by which information can be accessed.

Creating Foundational Documentation

To ensure that the system can be swiftly implemented, additional sub-committees that include experts from partner entities will specify how data definitions should be constructed and student information can be securely linked.

Committee Structures

Three types of committees will support the design process.

California Cradle to Career Data System Workgroup

The Workgroup is made up of partner entities specified in the legislation. This group will provide recommendations to the Governor's Office about data system development. The group will meet monthly.

Advisory Groups

The advisory groups include a broad range of perspectives and provide a means for the public to offer recommendations to the Workgroup about the data system. The Advisory Groups meet quarterly.

Policy & Analytics Advisory Group

This advisory group focuses on how to ensure the California Cradle to Career Data System supports research, evaluation, public accountability, and optimization of publicly-funded services at the state level.

Practice & Operations Advisory Group

This advisory group focuses on how to ensure the California Cradle to Career Data System supports improvement efforts at the institutional and regional level, a case management approach to service delivery, and tools that would be useful to students, families, and teachers.

Sub-Committees

To address highly technical considerations related to data system development, partner entities will designate individuals to serve on sub-committees. The sub-committees will develop recommendations for the Workgroup and create work products necessary for phase one implementation. The sub-committees will meet monthly.

Sub-committees are responsible for the following tasks:

Common Identifier Sub-Committee: design the technical process that will be used to link student records across partner entities

Definitions Sub-Committee: document technical definitions for key information that will be shared between partner entities in phase one

Legal Sub-Committee: create contracts to support data sharing and protect privacy

Research Agenda Sub-Committee: identify parameters for research on the six priority areas spelled out in the legislation: long-term outcomes of early childhood services, long-term outcomes of primary school interventions, college readiness for high school students, timeframes for community college students to transfer to four-year colleges and earn a baccalaureate degree, impact of financial aid on educational and career outcomes, and employment outcomes after students exit education. *Note: This sub-committee also includes representatives from research and advocacy groups.*

Technology & Security Sub-Committee: develop technology specifications requirements to address data structures and privacy considerations